

Aquaculture Task Force Recommendations

General

- I. The commonwealth should promote additional research into aquaculture marketing, consumer demand, and value-added product development through **funding for Kentucky Department of Agriculture aquaculture marketing programs and the Kentucky State University aquaculture research programs. Recommended funding of \$100,000 per organization per year.**
- II. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture should hire a full-time Aquaculture Marketing Specialist to work with the industry on development, marketing, and promotional efforts.
- III. Kentucky Department of Agriculture should continue to assist the aquaculture industry within the commonwealth to develop key infrastructure components such as hatcheries, processing, feed manufacture, marketing associations, collection points, and harvesting capabilities. This can be accomplished with information gathering and dissemination, marketing assistance, promotions, and grants.
- IV. Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky State University, and the Cooperative Extension Service should assure the provision of aquaculture marketing and production information to potential new producers within the commonwealth.
- V. The Kentucky Aquaculture Association is an effective farmer organization working to promote and develop the aquaculture industry in Kentucky. Kentucky Aquaculture Association should receive support funds to expand its efforts and hire an executive director.
- VI. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources should amend its regulations to allow holders of valid aquaculture propagation permits to possess, use, and transport seines of any size for use in the permit holder's aquaculture business.
- VII. Freshwater Shrimp (Prawns) (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*), are being raised in Kentucky by an increasing number of farmers. Freshwater shrimp has been demonstrated not be a threat to native species, as they cannot reproduce in freshwater. Because there is no danger of freshwater shrimp reproducing in the wild in Kentucky, it is recommended the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources not require a special non-native species exemption for producers of freshwater shrimp.

Legislative

- I. In order to assist the development of local markets for agriculture products, **legislation should be passed which favors the purchase of Kentucky grown products (including aquaculture products), when available, by all state funded projects, agencies, and institutions.**
- II. In order to support and expand the aquaculture extension assistance offered to Kentucky farmers, **the Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension Program should be funded proportionately, according to the same formula as the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Program in obtaining state funds for cooperative extension work.**
- III. Paddlefish is a valuable native species that is non-competitive with sport fish in the commonwealth's public waters. Reservoir ranching could potentially generate significant aquaculture income and create needed processing facilities in Kentucky. **The commonwealth should support efforts to develop controlled reservoir ranching of paddlefish in designated public bodies of water.**

Budgetary

- I. In order to diversify Kentucky Agriculture and foster the growth of aquaculture production in the commonwealth, **a 50 percent cost-share fund for the construction of aquaculture production ponds should be established and funded at a rate of \$500,000 in year one and \$750,000 for year two and beyond. Cost share fund should be administered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.**
- II. Aquaculture in Kentucky is a not a traditional agriculture enterprise. In order to provide aquaculture producers and entrepreneurs with access to funds to develop aquaculture enterprises, **the Legislature should establish a low-interest revolving loan fund specifically for aquaculture production in Kentucky and fund it at a rate of \$500,000 annually.**
- III. In order to continue to develop key infrastructure components such as hatcheries, processing facilities, feed manufacture, value-added product development, collection points, and harvesting resources, **a 50 percent cost-share grant program should be established and funded at \$500,000 per year. Cost share fund should be administered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.**
- IV. To date, the Kentucky State University aquaculture program has been funded almost entirely from federal funds. As a result, the research conducted has focused on issues of interest nationally. In order to direct the research focus on problems and opportunities within the commonwealth, **reoccurring state funds should be allocated Kentucky State University to address local and regional aquaculture opportunities and problems. Research should be funded at a rate of \$250,000 per year.**
- V. In order to support the rapid development of new aquaculture enterprises and production techniques, **state funding in the amount of \$500,000 per year for two years should be provided to Kentucky State University for additional research facilities.**